



West Virginia Amber Alert System

The purpose of the Amber Alert System is to provide a valuable tool for West Virginia law enforcement agencies in the ongoing battle to protect our children while allowing the broadcasters of West Virginia an opportunity to contribute to the communities they serve in an extremely beneficial capacity. Utilization of this plan will provide for maximum public participation to provide rapid response in the event of an abducted child. The media, public and law enforcement must work together to ensure the plan is not abused, which would lead to a lack of confidence in the plan and render the system ineffective. The Amber Alert System will only be used in **the most serious** child-abduction cases and **only** a law enforcement agency can request an Amber Alert activation. *The system will not be used for runaway or most parental abduction cases unless the circumstance is life-threatening to the child.*

Law Enforcement Activation Criteria

- Law enforcement confirms a child 17 years of age or younger has been abducted.
- Law enforcement believes the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate that the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
- Law enforcement has enough descriptive information about the child, abductor and suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast will facilitate the child's location.
- A law enforcement officer **must** enter the abducted child into NCIC and, in the comments section on the NCIC entry screen, **must** provide supporting documentation as to why the Amber Alert System should be activated.
- A law enforcement officer will complete a WVSP Form167, WV Amber Alert Request Form, and fax to WV State Police Communications Center (304) 746-2230.

Note:

- (1) *The system will not be used for runaway or most parental abduction cases unless the circumstance is life-threatening to the child.*
- (2) *If child is located within the 3 hour Alert period the Investigating Officer/Agency shall submit in writing to the WV State Police Communication Center that the child has been located and request the Amber Alert notification be cancelled.*

EAS Process

After verification from the State Police of the authenticity of the Amber Alert Request, the Charleston National Weather Service will activate the Emergency Alert System statewide (following established EAS procedures) using the CEM code (Civil Emergency.) This code will be used until a nationally recognized code is programmable in the existing EAS equipment. The NWS will immediately type in the information provided by the Amber Alert Request Form and the alerts will be broadcast every fifteen minutes for the first hour and every thirty minutes for the next two hours.

After the first alert, radio and television stations have the option of treating the Amber Alert as a news story; interrupting regularly scheduled programming. Should the State Police determine that new, timely information critical to the listening and viewing public has become available that will aid in the Amber Alert, then a second alert will be issued incorporating the new information. The State Police will make the determination.

Should Law Enforcement recover the abductee during the first three hours, a notice will be issued to discontinue the EAS activation.

If you have questions, or need more information about the West Virginia AMBER Alert Plan, please contact the West Virginia Broadcasters Association at 304-744-2143.